UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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Varieties.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame.
—O. W. Holmes.

There is no rivulet, however small, that does not conduct to the sea. There is not a hidden pathway in the valley which, step by step, does not lead up to the heights. The whole creation talks to him who knows how to lend an ear.
—Charles Wagner, in "The Simple Life."

When a certain fashion of thinking robs us of confidence, cheerfulness, and strength, we should reject that, certain not only that it is a nutriment noxious to the mind, but also that it is false.
—Charles Wagner, in "The Simple Life."

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways;
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise. —Whittier.

The most ingenuous hope is nearer truth than the most rational despair.—Charles Wagner.

Through the harsh noises of our day
A low sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt and creeds of fear
A light is breaking, calm and clear.
—Whittier.

Never do violence to your rational nature. He who in any case admits doctrines which contradict reason, has broken down the barrier between truth and falsehood, and lays open his mind to every delusion.—W. E. Channing.

If they who know the chains of creeds once knew the happiness of breathing the air of freedom, and of moving with an unencumbered spirit, no wealth or power in the world's gift would bribe them to part with their spiritual liberty.—W. E. Channing.

From the simple fact that we are men, before all theorising, positive or negative, about duty, we have the peremptory law to conduct ourselves like men. There is no getting out of it.—Charles Wagner.

Eden with its angels bold,
Love and flowers and coolest sea,
Is not ancient story told
But a glowing prophecy.
—Eliza T. Clapp.

A Unitarian Statement.

We believe that to love the good and live the good is the supreme thing in religion:

We hold reason and conscience to be final authorities in matters of religious belief:

We honour the Bible and all inspiring scripture, old or new:

We revere Jesus and all holy souls that have taught men truth and righteousness and love, as prophets of religion.

We believe in the growing nobility of Man:

We trust the unfolding Universe as beautiful, beneficent, unchanging Order; to know this Order is truth; to obey it is right, and liberty, and stronger life:

We believe that good and evil inevitably carry their own recompense, no good thing being failure and no evil thing success; that heaven and hell are states of being; that no evil can befall the good man in either life or death; that all things work together for the victory of Good:

We believe that we ought to join hands and work to make the good things better and the worst good, counting nothing good for self that is not good for all:

We believe that this self-forgetting, loyal life awakes in man the sense of union, here and now, with things eternal—the sense of deathlessness; and this sense is to us an earnest of a life to come:

We worship One-in-all,—that Life whence suns and stars derive their orbits and the soul of man its Ought,—that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, giving us power to become the sons of God,—that Love with whom our souls commune. This One we name—the Eternal God, our Father.

Pray in Deeds.

Give him a lift. Don't kneel in prayer,
Nor moralise with his despair.
The man is down, and his great need
Is ready help, not prayer and creed.

One grain of aid just now is more
To him than tomes of saintly lore.
Pray, if you must, pray in your heart,
But give him a lift, give him a start.

The world is full of good advice,
Of prayer and praise, and preaching nice;
But the generous souls who aid mankind
Are scarce as gold, and hard to find.

Give like a Christian—speak in deeds!
A noble life's the best of creeds;
And he shall wear a royal crown
Who gives men a lift when they are down.

—Anon.

Unitarians and Orthodoxy.

The Rev. Alexander Webster, of Aberdeen, in his book, "My Pilgrimage from Calvinism to Unitarianism" (British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Essex Street, Strand—1/-), says:—

My confirmed impression of Unitarianism as compared with Trinitarianism may be put thus—It is generally believed by Trinitarians that if they were to become Unitarians it must be by giving up every fundamental religious idea, cutting all connection with Jesus Christ, leaving every anchorage of the soul, and setting themselves adrift upon a heaving sea of doubt and denial, without a chart or compass, to be driven about by every wind of faithlessness. But the truth is that Unitarians have not given up any essential religious verity, they have not disconnected themselves from Christ; they have an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast.

Unitarianism comprehends all that is good and true in other "isms"; it is the unification of the truths and virtues of all. In becoming a Unitarian a man need not sacrifice religion, but only the detected errors of religion; he need not let go any truth, but may expect to find truth in wider, higher, and more reasonable aspects. He will still have God, Christ, Revelation, At-one-ment, Eternal Life as realities, but with their reality deepened.

Unitarians have not separated from others for freedom to be less religious, but with the desire to be more truly religious; they have given up belief in dogmas, because they think the Infinite cannot be formed as a dogma; they have left the company of all other sections of Christendom, not because they have given up Christianity, but because they seek to have it as Christ presented it, and in developed fulness.

They believe that they occupy a position in which a true unity in religion is possible—the position of reason, veracity, and progress. Ecclesiastically, they accept the principle underlying the idea of a National Church—viz., that religion is essential to true, full national life, but they would have the nationalised church one for the whole people—creedless, free, and adapted to the practical service of humanity. They stand with Dissenting Presbyterians against Erastianism, but they object to the popery of Presbyterianism.

Unitarians are at one with the Congregationalists in form of church government, while they are free from the dictation and interference of a central "union." With the Baptists, Unitarians believe that the decisions of religion should be "the deliberate acts of an adult, responsible soul," but they do not regard any particular form of baptism as essential.

Unitarians sympathise with the methodism and enthusiasm which Wesley left as a legacy to his followers, while they do not think that the dead hand of the master should suppress the living faculties of the disciple. Thus Unitarians touch other religionists at their vital points.

Doctrinally, Unitarianism has all the breadth of the "Broad Church" without its manifest defect of subscription to a creed; the respect of the "High Church" for a worthy and elevating worship, but not its sacramentarianism; the conservatism of the "Low Church," but not its bondage to the outgrown.

No Protestants honour the right of private judgment in religion more than Unitarians, but they exercise it more thoroughly than any others. Unitarians believe in "the decrees of God" as strongly as the Calvinist does, but they do not believe that God has decreed anyone to eternal perdition. They rejoice with the Armenian in "the free grace of God," but they make it universal and effectual with all. They are at one with Quakers in "seeking the ultimate source of religious authority in the witness of the spirit ever freshly given to souls that live in communion with God," but they do not sanctify silence, or regard the action of God's Spirit as supernatural. They value "spiritual discernment" as highly as the Swedenborgian, but they utilise it rationally. They have pleasure in going with the Universalists all the length they go, but they proceed further on the same lines. Whatever is essential in other forms of religious thought is comprehended in Unitarianism in a more advanced conception.

Theologically, the Unitarian comprehends more in the idea of God than the Trinitarian does. Trinitarians believe that the work of creation, salvation, and sanctification is done by THREE distinct persons; Unitarians believe that it is done by one God, in many ways, in different ages, and with various peoples. Unitarianism concentrates worship on one Infinite Being, and ascribes universal action and power to him alone.

The idea of the personality of Jesus Christ held by Trinitarians implies Incarnation. Unitarians believe that God is incarnate in Humanity, that in manhood God becomes flesh, that every man is "a partaker of the divine nature." They regard Jesus Christ as the greatest illustration of Divine Humanity, or God's Incarnation, the examplar of man's sonship in God.

The common notion of the Bible has the idea of

"Revelation of God" underlying it. Unitarians believe in the Revelation of God, but to them it is universal and continuous, running through all scientific discovery and spiritual experience, and is extant always in the developed and verified knowledge of the race. The Unitarian cannot confine God's revelation to Judea, but is obliged to believe that it is as wide as life, and to recognise it in every natural object and in every word of truth.

The idea sought to be expressed in the popular conception of the atonement is that of a medium of communication and harmonisation between God and man. Unitarians believe that such a medium exists naturally and universally. Every element, object, and law of Nature is a means of Divine Communication with Humanity, and every faculty of human nature is a mediator between man and God. The aspirations and experiences of the soul are the means of atonement with the Infinite.

Even the ideas underlying the dogmas of the devil and hell are comprehended in Unitarianism. These ideas are the terribleness, the subtlety, the malignity of evil, and the bitterness, the severity of the agony it brings upon the sinner. To the Unitarian, Ignorance, Error, Sensuality, Selfishness, Hatred, and Hypocrisy are the devil and his angels; and the darkened mind, the impure heart, the unfaithful conscience are hell.

Thus Unitarians differ from Trinitarians mainly in the developed form in which they embody the fundamental ideas of Religion. Unitarians do not reject any essential religious idea, but endeavour to unify and preserve all religious truth.

The comprehensiveness of Unitarianism fits it for universal acceptance. It is the religion of Nature and Humanity, the Christianity of Christ. Its Missionaries are men of science, and all who are in earnest for righteousness. The mind of the time gravitates towards it. The radical philosophy of the age is its pioneer. Its leaven has found its way into every church, and is working mightily. It stands before the religious thought and emotion of the age as the goal to which they will come when fully advanced. To-day Unitarianism is martyrdom; to-morrow it will be victory. Now—men confess it privately; anon they will profess it publicly.

A Doubtful Story.

In a dictionary of (orthodox) illustrations, under the heading of "The Divinity of Christ," the following incident is related:

"A Unitarian was once present at a revival service, and was invited to go forward to the altar and seek Christ. 'But,' said he, 'I do not believe in him.' It was suggested that he should test it by prayer. He went to the altar and poured out his test-prayer, 'O Christ! if thou be a God, reveal thyself.' He had not prayed long ere he sprung (!) up with new convictions, exclaiming 'He is a God, he is a God!'"

Any orthodox Christian who can believe that this story is true may well be pitied. It bears all through the stamp of manufactured untruth. In the first place, no Unitarian would assert "I do not believe in Christ"; he would declare I do not believe Christ to be God. Every Unitarian Christian does believe in Christ, as Christ is pictured in the gospels by himself. In Christ as he was the Unitarian believes, but in Christ as he has since been falsely pictured by others he does not believe. He believes in the divinity of Christ, too, but not in his deity. To the Unitarian, each human soul is of the same divine nature as God the Father of human souls, so he believes in the divinity of man, and therefore in that of the man Jesus. So it would be better if orthodox Christians would not make divinity and deity to mean the same.

Then no Unitarian would test belief or disbelief in an attempt to pray to Christ, for it is a principle with all Unitarians that prayer should be made as Jesus directed—to "Our Father" only. So the assertion that a Unitarian, of all people, went up to the altar and offered up a prayer to Christ is a manifest impossibility, and therefore untrue.

If our orthodox friends are influenced in their conclusions by such weak and watery intellectual pabulum as this, it is surely time that their eyes were opened to the need of stronger and more truly nourishing bread of fact and truth. We ask our readers to beware of such fictions.

The Tyranny of Texts.

Texts have been perverted from the earliest times to the most unworthy purposes. They have been quoted for centuries in the cause of ignorance and sin. They have been abused, by the endless errors of private interpretation, to countenance every absurdity, and check every science, and denounce every moral reformation. They were quoted against Columbus, against Copernicus, again Galileo, against the geologists. They were quoted against St. Peter, nay, even against Christ himself. They were quoted against Wycliffe, against Luther, against Wilberforce, against the cause of education, against the cause of temperance. They have been quoted in defence of polygamy, in defence of oppression, in defence of intolerance, in defence of the right divine of kings to govern wrong. I care but little in any controversy for the stress laid on one or two isolated and dubious texts out of the sacred literature of fifteen hundred years. They may be in fragmentary isolation; they may be misinterpreted; they may be irrelevant; they may be misunderstood; they may—as the Prophets and the Apostles and our blessed Lord himself distinctly intimated—they may reflect the ignorance of a dark age or the fragment of an imperfect revelation; they may be a bare concession to imperfection, or a low stepping-stone to progress. What the Bible teaches as a whole—what the Bibles also teach as a whole—for History, and Conscience, and Nature, and Experience, these, too, are sacred books—that, and that only, is the immutable law of God.

—F. W. Farrer, D.D.

HOME CIRCLE.

The Mother's Mission.

Mother, how divine your mission
Here upon our natal sod!
Keep, oh, keep the young heart open
Always to the breath of God!
All true trophies of the ages
Are from mother-love impearled,
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rocks the world.

A child, speaking of his home, was asked, "Where is your home?" Looking with loving eyes at his mother, he replied: "Where mother is."

Lobsters swim backwards. It is said that some fishes had a meeting, at which it was decided to open a class to teach young lobsters to swim forward like other fishes. For it was argued that if they began with the young ones, as they grew up they would learn to swim aright. Young lobsters came. At first they did very well; but afterwards, when they returned home and saw their fathers and mothers swimming in the backward way, they soon forgot their lessons. So many a child, well taught at school, is drifted backwards when home influences are bad.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all. —Coleridge.

Mrs. Ward's Heresy.

In Margaret Deland's book, "John Ward," Preacher," Mrs. Ward (Helen) is described in revolt against her husband's Calvinist theology.

On one occasion John Ward exchanged on Mission Sunday with a neighbouring minister, and his wife went with him. His morning sermon was on foreign missions. To begin with, he briefly told the congregation what foreign mission work the Presbyterian Church had done during the last year, described its methods, and what it proposed to do in the future.

"That's just a tunin' up—he'll set the heathen dancin' pretty soon; you see!" someone whispered behind Helen; and then there was a giggle and "Hush-sh!" as Mr. Ward proceeded to prove that the heathen were guilty, because Adam had sinned, that the wrath of God rested upon all unconverted souls, and that it would, unless they burst from their darkness into the glorious light of revealed truth, sink them to hell.

After the service was over, a woman said to Mrs. Ward, while she was waiting for her husband:

"Wonderful how some folks could stand against such doctrine; and yet they know it's a sin not to believe in everlasting punishment. I believe it's a mortal sin; don't you, Mrs. Ward?"

"No," said Helen quietly.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Ward went to the parsonage for dinner, where they were received by Mrs. Grier, the other minister's wife.

At the end of the meal, Mrs. Grier spoke of the sermon:

"It was a wonderful discourse, sir; seems as if nobody could stand against such doctrine as you gave us. I could have wished, though, you'd have told us your thoughts about infants being lost. There is a difference of opinion between Mr. Grier and two of our elders."

"What does brother Grier hold?" asked the preacher.

"Well," Mrs. Grier answered, shaking her head, "he does say they are all saved. But the elders, they say that the confession of faith teaches that elect infants are saved, and, of course, it follows that those not elect are lost. My father, Mr. Ward, was a real old-fashioned Christian, and I must say that was what I was taught to believe, and I hold by it."

"Mrs. Grier," Helen said, speaking quickly, "you say you believe it, but if you had ever lost a child I am sure you could not."

"I have, ma'am"—Mrs. Grier's thin lip quivered, and her eyes reddened a little—"but that can't make any difference in truth; besides, we have the blessed hope that he was an elect infant."

It would have been cruel to press the reason for this hope, and Helen listened instead with a breath of relief to what John was saying—he, at least, did not hold this horrible doctrine.

"No; I agree with your husband," he said. "True, all children are born in sin, and are despised and abhorred as sinners by God. Jonathan Edwards, you know, calls them 'vipers,' which, of course, was a crude and cruel way of stating the truth, that they are sinners. Yet, through the infinite mercy, they are saved because Christ died, not of themselves; in other words, all infants who die are elect."

Mrs. Grier shook her head. "I'm for holding to the catechism," she said; and then, with a sharp, thin laugh, she added: "But you're sound on the heathen, I must say."

Helen shivered, and it did not escape her hostess.

"But then," she proceeded, "I don't see how a person can help being sound on that, though it is surprising what people will doubt, even the things that are plainest to other people. I've many a time heard my father say that the proper holding of the doctrine of reprobation was necessary to eternal life. I suppose you believe that, Mr. Ward, even if you don't go all the way with the confession, about infants?"

"Yes," said John sadly; "I must; because not to believe in reprobation is to say that the sacrifice of the cross was a useless offering."

"And, of course," Mrs. Grier went on, "Mrs. Ward thinks so, too? Of course, she thinks that a belief in hell is necessary to get to heaven?"

The preacher looked at his wife with a growing anxiety in his face.

"No," Helen said, "I do not think so, Mrs. Grier."

Mrs. Grier flung up her little thin hands, which looked like bird-claws.

"You don't!" she cried shrilly. "Well now, I do say! And what do you think about the heathen then? Do you think they'll be damned?"

"No," Helen said again. Mrs. Grier gave a gurgle of astonishment, and looked at Mr. Ward, but he did not speak.

"Well," she exclaimed, "if I didn't think the heathen would be lost, I wouldn't see the use of the plan of salvation! Why, they've got to be!"

"If they had to be," cried Helen, with sudden passion, "I should want to be a heathen. I should be ashamed to be saved, if there were so many lost."

She stopped; the anguish in John's face silenced her.

"Well," Mrs. Grier said again, really enjoying the scene, "I'm surprised; I wouldn't a' believed it!"

She folded her hands across her waist, and looked at Mrs. Ward with keen interest. Helen's face flushed under the contemptuous curiosity in the woman's eyes; she turned appealingly to John.

"Mrs. Ward does not quite think as we do, yet," he said gently; "you know, she has not been a Presbyterian as long as we have."

He rose as he spoke, and came and stood by Helen's chair, and then walked at her side into the parlour.

Thus do we see orthodox superstition and human reason are in conflict. There are still professing "Christians" who hold to the horrible doctrines believed by Mrs. Grier and John Ward, and so-called "Christian" Churches that exist to propagate such doctrines. But all Unitarian Christians rebel against them and reject them as Mrs. Ward did. The spirit of reasonableness and love exemplified in Mrs. Ward will increase and prevail until cruel conceptions of God are destroyed, and doctrines of torment are driven away for ever.

The Fatherhood of God.

WHAT IT MEANS TO A UNITARIAN.

It means, O my brothers and sisters, that the Unseen Power behind the Universe, the Omnipotent, the Everlasting, the Energy by which all the hosts of worlds arise and have their being, that flashes in the shaft of life, that moves through the storm, and pulses in the sunshine; the Living Energy by which, myriad-fold, life arises on this earth of ours, by which life struggles from the dim sensation of the mollusc or crustacean up into the regal faculty of man; the one Power upon which all science strikes and can know no more, which all philosophy finds behind phenomena and calls by names that are strange and cold, before which all religion trembles with unutterable awe—it means that this Universal, Everlasting, All-Energising Power to which there is no small and no great, which thrills in the petal of a flower no less than it sends its currents down the orbits of the vastest suns—it means that this power, Supreme, All-Controlling, Unescapable, is not dead but lives, is not a Terror, but a Love ineffable, is not a far-off Sovereign, inaccessible, implacable, but the Father of my spirit and of yours, caring for us, tending us, loving us, protecting us, listening to the faintest whisper of our hearts, answering with celestial love each cry of our sorrow or our need. He is not far off, but here. He is not long ago, but now. He is not in his exaltation out of touch with our weakness; but his everlasting strength bends over us with understanding, sympathy, closer, dearer, holier, more healing than the love of any friend on earth. It means that on the purity of our hearts alone depends the closeness of our communion with our God; and that He will help us to make pure our hearts. It means that nothing can ever come between Him and His human child; that even sin cannot hide us from Him or alienate His love; that though a mother forget her child, He can forget us never; that whenever the prodigal, with a cry of sorrow, stretches forth his hands to the Father, and yearns to be reconciled to Him, the Father is ready always and receives him with the healing mercy of His love.—R. A. Armstrong, B.A., "The Principles and Ideals of Unitarians." (Essex Hall, London, 1d.)

Jesus and Salvation.

Jesus sums up his attitude, officially, once and for ever, in that marvellous parable of the Prodigal Son. He does not think that there is any gulf between God and His children, no wrath that needs to be appeased, no devil lurking in the background to be paid his price, no substitution. The father yearns for and loves his boy, no matter how sinful he is, away off in the far country; and when the boy rises and says, "I will go home to my father," the father does not say, "Well, what offering are you going to bring? How are you going to appease my wrath?" He does not say "The family government will go all to pieces if I forgive you without somebody suffering." He does not say anything. Only the moment he sees him a great way off, he runs to him, and falls on his neck and kisses him, and then makes a feast in the gladness of his heart, because he is come back again. That is the official teaching of Jesus as to the attitude of God towards his erring, sinful children. If Jesus had known anything about these theological schemes, if he had known they were true, then was the place and then was the time for him to tell us of it; for, if he did not tell us, he was misleading us, misrepresenting God in what was the one most vital thing in human life.—M. J. Savage.

Francis William Newman, the brother of Cardinal Newman, was a member of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association from 1875 onwards, and became one of its vice-presidents.

Evolution of Unitarianism.

There is no life apart from movement. All real religious life is intimately connected with growth in thought and feeling. Unitarianism stands for freedom, and in its freedom to grow there have been many changes of opinion and belief amongst its adherents. In the career of the late Dr. James Martineau, the development of thought amongst Unitarians is clearly illustrated. The Unitarian theology in which James Martineau was nurtured and educated was very different from the Unitarian theology of to-day. It was the theology of Lindsey, Priestley, and Belsham. To them the Bible was the authoritative criterion of truth, the infallible word of God. In their view "Unitarianism was true because it was the doctrine of the New Testament. Trinitarianism would be true if it could be proved from the same supernatural source. It was not rejected because it was incomprehensible, but because it could not be found in Scripture." Such is the description given by no less an authority than Professor Estlin Carpenter. Theophilus Lindsey wrote: "No Unitarian that I know or have read of could ever object to any part of a divine revelation, because it was beyond his comprehension. Let me know but clearly that God has signified his mind and will; and then let the subject be ever so unfathomable by me, I will receive and believe it; because no better reason can possibly be given for anything than that God has said it."

Belsham also said: "If a well-attested revelation distinctly teaches that the world was made and is governed by delegated power, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the person to whom that power was entrusted, I must bow to its authority, and admit the fact."

The Rev. C. Wellbeloved, who was Principal of Manchester College, York, where James Martineau was educated for the ministry, testified to this general position as follows: "I adopt the common language of Unitarians when I say, Convince us that any tenet is authorised by the Bible, from that moment we receive it. Prove any doctrine to be a doctrine of Christ, emanating from that wisdom which was from above, and we take it for our own, and no power on earth shall wrest it from us."

"If Jesus had received commandment from the Father to teach it (the doctrine of the Trinity) to his disciples, and had charged them to publish it to the world, I should deem it incumbent on me, at the command of God, to lay prostrate the understanding derived from his inspiration, and on this subject to renounce the use of that reason which he has made the glory of my frame."

The Rev. John James Tayler, speaking at his own ordination, on the work of the Unitarian Christian minister, asserted: "Whatever the Scriptures teach as indubitably the word of God, it is his bounden duty to recommend and enforce."

The Unitarian doctrine of the Bible was not then what it is now. There has been a great development away from the position of Bibliolatry, or the worship of the Book as an idol, to the more reasonable view as put by Theodore Parker: "The Bible was made for man, not man for the Bible."

A century ago Unitarians believed in the Resurrection as a resurrection of the fleshly body. Indeed, they were so materialistic that they denied the existence of a separate soul, according to the philosophy of Priestley, although a few, like Mrs. Barbauld, did not share that view. But even W. J. Fox in 1819 distinguished Unitarians from other Christians by explaining that their "hope of future existence" depended "upon the doctrine of the Resurrection, and not upon the Orthodox and Deistical notion of the natural immortality of the soul."

But now there is no trace of this materialism amongst Unitarians. They do not—any of them—believe in the resurrection of the fleshly body after death, and they believe in the natural immortality of the soul.

In the old Unitarianism Jesus was a semi-supernatural being, specially commissioned by God for the work he did. The pre-existence of Jesus, in a sense never thought of in regard to other human beings—was a tenet generally held by Unitarians. But now Unitarianism has grown into the doctrine of the pure humanity of Jesus, commissioned as others are commissioned by natural endowment for the work he was most fitted to do, and existing previous to his earthly career in no way that is not true of all men.

When James Martineau entered the ministry as a preacher of Unitarianism, the predominant philosophy of his Unitarian faith, as derived from Priestley and Hartley, was Determinism and Necessarianism in opposition to the doctrine of Free-will. Now Unitarianism includes belief in the freedom of the will and its consequent individual responsibility. Then also the truth of a doctrine was considered by Unitarians to be proved by miracles, and belief in the New Testament miracles and Biblical miracles generally was part of the current Unitarian doctrine. But now such belief is no part of Unitarianism. On this subject of change in Unitarian thought and doctrine, Professor Estlin Carpenter provides much valuable information in his last book, "James Martineau, Theologian and Teacher" (7/6 net, postage 5d., Essex Hall, London), the reading of which has suggested this article, and which book all readers of "Unity" should become intimately acquainted with.

Unitarianism has been evolved in the atmosphere of freedom. It has been a growth. And the life of Unitarianism depends on further growth and still more advance to new light. Stagnation and standing still would be its death. The development that is coming will bring to Unitarianism a grander conception of religion and life than any that is yet dreamt of.

Not by precept, though heard daily; not by example, unless it is followed; but only by action, often caused by the related feeling, can a moral habit be formed.—Herbert Spencer.

Immanuel.

IMMANUEL, Matt. i., 23: "They shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us" (R.V.) On this, Dr. G. Vance Smith says: "A more careful and impartial regard to the usage of the Greek language (as of the Hebrew also) would have rendered these words differently. In both languages, in simple sentences like this, the verb of existence is constantly unexpressed, although it is to be understood. Remembering this fact, we should render 'God is with us'; and the implication is that in the child to be born, the promised Christ, God will be with his people to protect and save them. As the words stand, they seem to represent the coming child as God. This cannot possibly be held to be the Evangelist's intention, when all the circumstances of the context are taken into the account."

But in any case, supposing the prophet Isaiah (vii., 14), from whom the words were quoted, really intended them for Jesus of Nazareth, can that be rightly considered an argument proving that Jesus was God? Was it not a prevalent custom to give names to Hebrew children, some part of which meant 'God'? Samuel (heard of God); Lemuel (God with them); Elijah (God the Lord); Elihu (God himself): these are a few instances out of many. Yet surely Elihu was not God himself, nor was Elijah God the Lord—though their names had such meanings; and Immanuel (God is with us) as a name given to a child, is no more evidence of that child being God than are the other instances referred to.

Dr. Pye Smith, an orthodox writer, has on this point stated that "The fact is unquestionable that the gratitude or hope of individuals, in ancient Scriptural times, was often expressed by the imposition of significant appellations on persons or other objects, in the composition of which Divine names and titles were frequently employed; these are therefore nothing but short sentences, declarative of some blessing possessed or expected." Professor Moses Stuart, a Trinitarian authority, has said that "to maintain that the name Immanuel proves the doctrine in question (Deity of Christ) is a fallacious argument."

As a matter of fact, the prophet Isaiah, who used the words, had no thought of Jesus in his mind. He wrote quite 730 years before Jesus was ever heard of. This particular part of Isaiah's writing is in the reign of Ahaz, King of Judah, about 734 B.C. There is a league of Pekah, King of Israel, and Rezin, King of Syria—against Judah. Ahaz is terrified at the prospect of invasion. The prophet boldly declares there is nothing to fear. The prophet declares a "sign" from God to indicate a point of time. The sign is that before a certain child about to be born has become old enough to know how to refuse evil and choose good, both Syria and Israel will have become desolated, and Judah delivered from any fear of Pekah and Rezin. As adding to the assurance that the deliverance is from Jehovah, the prophet says of the child that he will be called Immanuel—"God is with us." Any intelligent and unbiassed reader may see at once from the passage itself (Isaiah vii.) that the prophet is speaking of something happening in his own time; the child may have been any child about to be born then in Jerusalem, or it may have been a child about to be born to the prophet himself. Dr. Pye Smith says: "It seems to be as clear as words can make it, that the son promised was born within a year after the giving of the prediction; that his being so born at the assigned period was the sign or pledge that the political deliverance announced to Ahaz should certainly take place" (quoted by J. Martineau in "Unitarianism Defended.")

Of the use of this passage by the writer of the First Gospel, James Martineau said (in "Unitarianism Defended"): "The citation of it in this connection by the evangelist is an example of those loose accommodations, or even misapplications, of passages in the Old Testament by writers in the New, which the most resolute orthodoxy is unable to deny." And in order to estimate its value in "Matthew" as applied to Jesus, it must not be forgotten that the New Testament Gospels were written long after the time of Jesus; "Matthew," not before 70 A.D.; indeed, some expert scholars maintain that this "first" Gospel could not have been written earlier than 100 A.D. (Julicher 100; Schmiedel 130). It is plain from the frequency with which the writer appeals to statements by Old Testament prophets, and the way in which he does it, that he makes his quotations to support some theory: that Jesus was the promised Messiah. As Professor E Carpenter says: "Incident after incident occurs 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet'" ("The First Three Gospels," 3rd ed., p. 276). And the way in which this particular quotation from Isaiah is used only serves to make such usage of Gospel writers appear ridiculous to those who understand what Isaiah meant when he wrote the words. The language, reduced to statement of what the words really mean, amounts to this: that Jesus came that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, that a child should be born in the time of Ahaz, over 700 years before, as a sign of Judah's deliverance from the power of the allied Kings, Pekah and Rezin—which is absurd.

The prophecy had no relation whatever either to the birth of Jesus centuries afterwards, nor any possible connection with the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, which doctrine would have been repugnant most of all to a Jewish prophet; and especially to one credited with resenting the idea of a divided Godhead more emphatically than any other Hebrew writer, in words that cannot be misunderstood: "Thus saith the Lord—besides me there is no God" (Isaiah xliv., 6); "I am God, and there is none else" ((xlv., 22); "I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another" xlii., 8).

As in orthodox treatises on Divinity, and in Trinitarian Hymnology, the term "Immanuel" still passes for evidence that Jesus was God, the statement of facts here given is still necessary for those who want the truth.

Texts and Comments.

"The word was made flesh and dwelt among **us**, and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."—John i., 14.

Can "the only-begotten" of God be God himself?

"The only-begotten son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."—John i., 18.

Can one who is in the bosom of God be God, or is it not clear that the two are distinct and different? Is not the "son" of God a being different from God?

"God sent his only-begotten son into the world."—I. John iv., 9.

"Only-begotten" is a Hebrew term of endearment, which is not intended to be taken literally, for the same writer says: "Every one that loveth is begotten of God," in v. 7, preceding.

"He is Lord of all."—Acts x., 36.

Not God of all, but the chief of all men, the head of humanity; but these words may not refer to Jesus, but to the real antecedent subject of the sentence—the One who sent the word by the preaching of Jesus.

"Crucified the Lord of Glory."—I. Cor. ii., 8.

The context says that God's wisdom is fore-ordained "to our glory"; had the rulers of the world known this wisdom, they would not have crucified the Leader of glory (or, the glorious Leader) "Lord," meaning here head or chief of a divine or glorious humanity. Nothing here stating that the "Lord of Glory" is God.

". . . thought it not robbery to be equal with God."—Phil. ii., 6.

The Revised Version reads: "Counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God," and explains in margin that the Greek means literally—not "a thing to be grasped at." A plain assertion that Jesus did not aim at equality with God.

The Wesleys and Calvinism.

The Wesleys both had a great dislike against Calvinism. Charles was very severe upon it. He had a theory that Calvinism soured the temper just as rennet soured milk. Preaching one day, he declared: "I never knew such a thing as a good-tempered Calvinist; it is a contradiction in terms, a moral impossibility." A man started up at the farther end of the chapel and screamed out, "You're a liar!" Ah," said Charles Wesley, "have I drawn out Leviathan with a hook?"

Orthodox Tyranny.

There is that in the orthodox theologies which drives men to the assertion of authority over other men's minds and consciences. There is that in the gospel commonly called Unitarian—which is indeed nothing else than the pure gospel of Jesus, expressed in terms of our modern day—which waters the roots of liberty, and forbids the tyranny of Priest or Presbyter.—(Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., in Introduction—"Types of Religious Experience," 1/9 post free, Essex Hall, London).

A Converted Congregationalist.

A convert from orthodox Congregationalism speaks thus of his ministry in the Unitarian Church:—

I have laboured in the full persuasion of the absolute unity of truth, and in the sole authority of reason in things moral and spiritual. I believe in no mysterious arcana into which the reverently seeking mind, if it be able, may not penetrate. Nor do I allow that any person, however exalted, or scripture, however sacred, can authoritatively override those personal convictions which are lightened up by whatever of the divine may quicken and chasten the human soul. But, because to get into sympathetic touch with the master thoughts of the wisest and most spiritual of our kind is the noblest means of our enlightenment, I am proud of that religious and intellectual home that calls no good man a stranger, and which offers a generous welcome to all who seek the Eternal in spirit and in truth.—(Rev. W. Wooding, B.A., in "Types of Religious Experience," B. and F.U. Association, Essex Hall, 1/6; (1/9 post free).

Of the Bible, Francis W. Newman said: "The Bible is a blessed book, rightly used; yet the Bible may be causing more spiritual evil than any other book, if by it you smother the Holy Spirit within yourselves."—("The Soul," Essex Hall, 6d., 340 pages).

To Our Readers.

This issue completes the second year of "Unity," and the Editor begs to thank all who have assisted and supported his venture. From the first there has been a circulation sufficient to pay for printing, distribution, postages, and stationery. But the sale prices are so near to bare cost (in order to make it easy for churches to adopt the paper as their monthly congregational magazine) that there is no margin to allow for loss through any unpaid debts. So far all accounts for the supply of "Unity" have been honourably paid, and the Editor has thus been protected from out of pocket loss. The work of Editor and contributors is done without pecuniary reward or what is called "pay." Their labours are "given" FOR THE CAUSE. This alone makes it possible to provide churches with a congregational magazine at less cost than is usually paid for the printing of a separate leaflet calendar only. It is hoped that this gratuitous service will meet with largely increased support from those churches for which it is so readily given. The Editor has been gratified at numerous expressions of appreciation of "Unity," and he will endeavour to make it more worthy of the larger circulation needed to establish it on a permanently secure basis.

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